

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 10043

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: FAO, PINR, CI
SUBJECT: BIOGRAPHIC DATA: WORLD AGRARIAN REFORM CONFERENCE:
JACQUES CHONCHOL CHAIT

REFS: (A) STATE 285234, (B) ROME 19129

1. JACQUES CHONCHOL SERVED AS A LEADER OF THE MARXIST-ORIENTED UNITED POPULAR ACTION MOVEMENT (MAPU), FORMED BY LEFTIST DISSIDENTS OF THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDC), PRIOR TO HIS APPOINTMENT AS MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE BY PRESIDENT SALVADOR ALLENDE ON NOVEMBER 3, 1970. HE HAD EARLIER SERVED AS EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE AGRICULTURE AND LIVESTOCK DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE (INDAP) UNDER THEN PRESIDENT EDUARDO FREI.

2. CHONCHOL IS BEST REMEMBERED FOR HIS AGGRESSIVE VIEWS ON AGRARIAN REFORM, WHICH HE PROMISED WOULD BE "DRASTIC AND COMPLETE" FOR CHILE. HE PARTED COMPANY WITH FREI IN 1968 AFTER HIS RADICAL IDEAS PROVED EXCESSIVE FOR THE PDC MAINSTREAM. IN HIS BOOK, "THE DEVELOPMENT OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE AGRARIAN REFORM," CHONCHOL ARGUED THAT AGRARIAN REFORM WAS NEITHER A TECHNICAL NOR AN ECONOMIC PROCESS, BUT RATHER A POLITICAL ONE. UNDER ALLENDE, HE EXPEDITED THE EXPROPRIATION OF LARGE FARMS AND THE ORGANIZATION OF PEASANTS COUNCILS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE.

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3. AFTER THE SEPTEMBER 11, 1973 MILITARY COUP, CHONCHOL WENT UNDERGROUND AND IN JANUARY 1974 REPORTEDLY SOUGHT ASYLUM IN THE VENEZUELAN AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE. A GOC FOREIGN MINISTRY LISTING LATER PLACED HIM AS AN ASYLEE IN FRANCE. A SEPTEMBER 10, 1976 NEWS ARTICLE REPORTED CHONCHOL'S PARTICIPATION IN A TWO-WEEK DEMONSTRATION ORGANIZED BY THE CHILEAN EXILE COMMUNITY IN MONTREAL.

CHONCHOL ALSO RECENTLY (OCTOBER 1977) PARTICIPATED IN A PARIS SEMINAR WHICH ASSESSED THE POSSIBILITY OF LATIN AMERICAN STYL MILITARY DICTATORSHIPS SPREADING TO EUROPE.

4. EARLY LIFE: JACQUES CHONCHOL WAS BORN ON MARCH 26, 1926 IN SANTIAGO. HE RECEIVED A DEGREE IN AGRICULTURAL ENGINEERING FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF CHILE IN 1949 AND LATER STUDIED IN FRANCE AND AT THE LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS. FOLLOWING HIS FORMAL STUDIES, HE WORKED FOR THE MINISTRY OF THE ECONOMY, THE CHILEAN DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION, AND THE US OPERATIONS MISSION IN CHILE AND SOON BECAME KNOWN AS ONE OF THE COUNTRY'S LEADING AGRONOMISTS. STARTING IN 1975 HE TOOK ON JOBS WITH THE UNITED NATIONS, WORKING FOR BOTH THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE UN FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION AS A SPECIALIST IN AGRARIAN REFORM. IN THIS CAPACITY, CHONCHOL WORKED IN MEXICO, COLOMBIA, VENEZUELA, PERU AND CUBA. HE SERVED THE FIDEL CASTRO GOVERNMENT FROM 1959 TO 1962 AS A TECHNICAL DIRECTOR FOR THE CUBAN AGRARIAN REFORM INSTITUTE.

5. PERSONAL DATA: FORMER PRESIDENT FREI ONCE DESCRIBED CHONCHOL AS THE MOST BRILLIANT MAN IN THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY. A MAY 1971 INTELLIGENCE REPORT ADDED THAT CHONCHOL POSSESSED A CONSIDERABLE DEGREE OF CHARISMA, UNLIKE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE ALLENDE CABINET. THE REPORT STATED, HOWEVER, THAT CHONCHOL HAD A GREAT DEAL OF NAIVETE, LEADING HIM TO ENVISION FANCIFUL SOLUTIONS TO CHILE'S PROBLEMS WHICH ULTIMATELY EXACTED AN EXTRA-CONFIDENTIAL

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ORDINARY DEGREE OF SELF DISCIPLINE AND SACRIFICE FROM HIS FELLOW CITIZENS, AND DESCRIBED HIM AS AN ANGRY MAN, SO DISTURBED BY SOCIAL INEQUITIES THAT HE HAD CEASED TO SEE THE POSSIBILITIES FOR REFORM AND HAD OPTED FOR REVOLUTION INSTEAD. OF JEWISH ORIGIN, CHONCHOL IS REPORTEDLY NOW REGARDED AS A STRONG CATHOLIC. A MAN OF SCHOLARLY APPEARANCE, HE HAS AUTHORED A NUMBER OF BOOKS AND ARTICLES. THE 1971 REPORT LISTED HIM AS MARRIED TO THE FORMER MARIA EDY FERRIERA, A BRAZILIAN NATIONAL, WITH ONE SON, JUAN DIEGO. CHONCHOL SPEAKS ENGLISH AND HAS VISITED THE UNITED STATES SEVERAL TIMES. HE LECTURED AT CORNELL UNIVERSITY, THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN AND THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTE IN OCTOBER 1969.

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